

THE KING PASSING OVER KIDRON

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"The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron."

2 Samuel 15:23

THE brook Kidron was an insignificant, but usually a most foul and filthy ditch, outside the walls of Jerusalem. If it was not, as some have called it, the open town sewer, yet there are reasons for believing that at least the filth of the temple ran into it. The scourings of the sacrificial places went by an under-channel into this brook, and we have one or two instances in Holy Writ where, when houses were purged and cleansed, the filth was thrown into the brook Kidron. The passing, therefore, over that foul and black brook becomes the symbol of a time of deep sorrow and acute distress. The king himself, then, passed over the brook Kidron. The royal road lies over the place of sorrow. The way, even for kings, is by the brook of grief and shame. Let us think over that thought for a while.

I. THIS WAS TRUE OF KING DAVID.

David was one of the best of kings, certainly in the long list of his successors we meet with, none did such service to his country as did David, the once shepherd boy. It was through him, in his youth, that the country was saved from being enslaved by Philistia, and oftentimes in after years that stout heart and brave arm led in the van against the enemies of the Israel of God. He was the patriot king. If his country became a happy one, it was through his valor that it became so. And yet, good as he was, his subjects disowned him, and turned against him, and, in fear of them, "the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron."

It is an ungrateful world we live in. Those who serve it best will find that at times it gives no rewards, or only gives them grudgingly, and afterwards forgets the good the man has done, because for some one moment the tide of popular feeling may set against him. "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." If you live to your fellow men, even with the largest desires within you, yet if you forget also to live to your God, your cup will be full of wormwood, and your teeth will be broken with the gravel stones of disappointment.

David was also *one of the tenderest of fathers*. He was never exacting with his children. I do not say he was one of the best of fathers, for correction was much neglected in his house. But he was a tender father, and he had denied to Absalom nothing. And yet this renegade, this ungrateful, this unnatural son, was the very one from whom the sting must come.

Marvel not if they who owe their lives to you should seek your life. Marvel not if those who nestled once in your bosoms should wound you to the quick with their unkindness. You must not build upon the love of even the dearest you know. Your God is faithful, and the Well-Beloved never changes, but all others can, and may, and sometimes do. 'Twas a dark brook Kidron which David passed over when his favorite son, Absalom, was in hot pursuit of him, but the great king, the good monarch, the tender father, was not exempted from this.

Despite the one great stain upon his character in the matter of Bathsheba, David was one of the best and most devout of men. I am sure the older one grows the more one loves his psalms, and what a history of the man you have there! It is a mercy for us that he was not a better man than he was, or else he could not have written psalms suitable to such poor creatures as we are.

I think I saw the other day in a window, concerning a certain statesman whom I love to honor, that he would be a better statesman if he were a worse man. I think not so, but still David, if he had been a better man, would have been a worse psalmist, for even the faults of his character, inasmuch as they bring him down to our poor level, qualify him to write according to the feelings of our hearts and the emotions of our spirits. But he was a grand man, that David.

He had the soldier's fault, and he fell into the soldier's sin, but he also had the soldier's generous spirit, the soldier's self-sacrificing nobility of heart. He was through and through a man. In him there was no guile, he hated deception, and he loved his God with all his heart, and yet, for all that, he must needs pass over the brook Kidron. Hated by his subjects, despised by his darling child, with all the robes of royalty put aside, bare-footed and with sackcloth on his head, Jerusalem's best and greatest king makes his way into the wilderness.

I gather from this that there is no extent of sorrow which is not possible to an heir of heaven, and more yet, that there is no degree of shame, of calumny, and of reproach, which may not gather around the best of men. The king also himself passed over Kidron, and you know what happened when he passed over. The faithful soldiery wept as they saw that royal head dishonored, and those bright eyes that had flashed death upon his foes in the day of battle, now red with weeping.

But what did Shimei do? He cursed him, and threw dust upon him, and said, "Go up, thou bloody man!" And what did Ahithophel do? He forsook him, seceded to the winning side, and plotted the death of his former friend, even King David himself, with whom he had so often eaten bread and walked to the house of God in company. And what said they all over the nation concerning David, but that God had forsaken him, and therefore they might forsake and attack him, for the David of former days was not the same David now, his God had left him, and the crown was given to his son.

Ah! my brethren, we know not what we may come to. We do not know what depths of grief we may yet have to fathom, nor into what deep mire we may yet sink. There is no saying. The best of men may have the worst of characters, the brightest stars may be swallowed up of night, the moon in her brightness may be hidden by the clouds, and the sun himself, beneath the wings of tempest, may be concealed. Shall we, when we see our Christian brethren assailed, forsake them? Shall we join in the common clamor against them? We shall if we are not good men and true, but if we be such as God would have us be, we shall stand up for God's David as Ittai and his bodyguard did in the day of battle.

We shall say, "These are the servants of the Most High God, persecute them as you may, cast the dust of slander upon them, call them fanatics, enthusiasts, disturbers of the peace, and turners of the world upside down, we cast in our lot with them, for better and for worse we take their Master and themselves, and across their Kidron will we go with them, believing that the day shall come when it shall be thought worth men's while to come back with them after another sort."

For, brethren, David came again up to Jerusalem. The Lord smote his enemies in their hinder parts and put them to the rout. He came back again with sound of song and rejoicing. And so shall the righteous do, so shall the best of men, in the day when God lighteth their candle, and putteth every tongue that riseth against them in judgment to eternal condemnation. Stand ye to the right, stand to the true, stand faithful, be willing to suffer, be willing to be rebuked, be willing to be slandered. King David went this way before you, and the day shall come when you, like him, shall come up from the slander and the scorn the better for it all, rejoicing in God, who is the God of your salvation.

Thus much on David. I think there is much of interesting truth to be gathered from David's history in passing over Kidron, if we had time to bring it out, but I rather suggest a vein of thought than attempt to enlarge upon it.

But now, secondly—

II. A GREATER KING THAN DAVID PASSED OVER THE BROOK KIDRON, and if, as David passed, all the people wept, let the people weep tonight as they remember how Zion's greater King passed over that black brook.

There never was such a King as He—so glorious and fair to look upon. His eyes were the suns of heaven, and His presence was the glory thereof. But He came down amongst His creatures, who were fallen, seeking nothing but their good. He raised their dead, He healed their sick, when they were hungry He fed them, and when they were fainting He refreshed them. His words were those of love, and His teachings full of wisdom and of grace. But now they seek His blood, ay, they seek His blood, and in the night they are pursuing Him. They will come upon Him, they will hail Him off to the judgment seat, they will put Him to death.

Oh! cruel world, not to know its best benefactor! One of our poets has called Christ “the great philanthropist,” and so He was, only the word falls far short of what He really was, for He loved His people with all His heart. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, yea, His own, the Jews, were fiercest in His destruction.

As the King passed over Kidron on that gloomy night He had with Him a band of friends, but what was their friendship worth? They were true in heart, but they were weak and feeble, and when the conflict came, they all forsook Him and fled. Peter, where art thou? I know thee, I hear thee say, “I know not the man,” as with oaths and cursing thou dost deny Him.

And John, where art thou? Was not that John, the young man upon whom they laid hands, and he fled and left his garments behind him? Where are any of them? “Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.” In that bitter hour when He passed over Kidron, to make His cup as bitter as it could be, the kiss that betrayed Him came from the lip of Judas, the treasurer of His little band. “Friend!” he said and betrayed Him with a friendly word upon His traitorous tongue.

To enter into the griefs of our Lord in Gethsemane is not our business tonight, though we feel as if we must linger amongst those beds of bitter herbs and stand and look into Kidron’s gloomy stream. But you remember how He suffered even unto the death for us, and what were the agonies by which He purchased our redemption! There is this concerning our Lord, which is not matched by David—he did actually die, he was absolutely slain. The foes who pursued Him overtook Him, they pierced His hands and His feet, they lifted Him up a spectacle of scorn, and there He died.

But His cross was His triumph. Calvary was a battlefield, on which He won the victory, and like David, He came back again into Jerusalem, rising from the grave, no more to suffer or to die, and He returned again to the heaven whence He came, with sound of clarion, and with noise of them that make music and melody for joy of heart—“Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in!”

See then, dear brethren, in the person of our Lord, that this is a prophecy and an assurance that the cause right and of truth, that those who espouse that cause and are pure and perfect themselves, may, nevertheless, be brought very low, even to the dust it may be, slandered, and despised, and rejected, and yet for all that, their triumph is not in jeopardy, and neither their cause nor themselves imperiled.

Oh! it makes one strong to feel this. There cannot be anything happen to us so severe as has already happened to our King, there cannot be any slander more fierce than the slander poured on Him. They have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, what now can they call the men of His household? They must find some lighter name for us. Be encouraged then, ye feeble bands of trembling Christians, encouraged in all your sufferings and griefs for Christ’s sake, for as He yet rose from the dead and led captivity captive, even so shall the feeblest of His followers.

And so I shall close by just speaking—

III. A WORD OR TWO TO OURSELVES CONCERNING OUR PASSING THE BROOK KIDRON.

Ah! we do not like going over Kidron. When it comes to the pinch, how we struggle against suffering, and especially against dishonor and slander! How many there were who would have gone on pilgrimage, but that Mr. Shame proved too much for them, they could not bear to go over the black brook Kidron, could not endure to be made nothing of for the sake of the Lord of glory, but they even turned back.

Now I have these two words to say. First, dear brethren, with regard to the great cause of God throughout the world, *we must expect, in following truth, to meet with many brunts, many hardships, and many defeats*. I do not think that the Lord's cause was ever meant to be consecutively triumphant, without intervals of defeat. The sea advances to the flood tide wave by wave, first one wave advances, and then it recedes, then another comes up and recedes again, and sometimes when the tide is coming to the very highest, there will be one of those waves which seems to go back and leave a wider space bare of sea water than before.

And so it is with the cause of Christianity. A great wave rolled up at Pentecost, but it seemed to pause a while under Herod's persecution. Then came other waves, until the world beheld in some degree the light of Christ in all its corners. But again, there was a pausing for a while in those ages, which we call the dark ages. Then came a mighty wave again, which we couple with the name of Luther and of Calvin. Again there seemed to be a drawback, and then again in the days of Whitfield, and Wesley, and Jonathan Edwards, and others, there was another revival, and so it will be, I suppose, right on to the end of the chapter—progress, and then a staying of the work, great success, then temporary defeat.

Now are any of you living in districts where, notwithstanding much earnest work, the name of Christ does not seem to win the day? Do not be downcast, do not be dispirited. Rather go to the throne of grace more earnestly and ask for grace to gird yourselves afresh for the battle. The King passed over Kidron, and so shall His cause in your village, in your street, and the whole cause of God to which you are attached. But the King came back again, and so will He come back to you if you keep up heart and courage, and be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

I know how it is in some of your hearts. You seemed to be growing in grace so fast, you thought, "I shall soon reach a high standard of grace," but now you are discovering your corruption, you are perplexed and cast down because you do not grow as you once did. You are not so happy as you once were. Well, you are passing over your Kidron it may be, but do not be afraid. The King, that has come to dwell in your hearts, though He be driven for a little into the wilderness and be hidden in the dark corners of your spirit, will come up again, and take the throne, and reign, and drive out His enemy.

Hold on, hold on to Christ's cross and crown, for the victory will attend them still. Only be patient, for God is in no hurry. Wait, and let Him have His time, and the good work around you, and the work within you, will prove to be successful after all. Just at this juncture we, who fight for Christ's crown and seek to set His truth free from the unholy alliance which she has so basely formed, may find, perhaps, that for a while disappointment awaits our banners, but if it does, we shall not for a moment quail in our courage, nor stay in pressing the good cause on to the ultimate and the universal victory.

Perhaps 'tis well that we do wait awhile, for we might achieve but one purpose now, but a little pausing will set us on greater designs and on nobler aims. One church set free in Ireland, if it be not done quickly, another shall be set free, and England's church be made to know that she hath no right to ride rough-shod over this nation, and liberty and religious equality be proclaimed here as well as there, and that the sooner because of the delay.

Let the King's cause go over Kidron for a while, and the great ones of the earth set themselves in array against Christ and His crown, but the victory will come, and we can afford to wait and tarry till the predestined hour, for perhaps by waiting the vessel shall come back laden the more richly with treasure, to the water's edge pressed down with costly freight. But back she will come, come certainly and surely, to her Master's honor, and to the comfort of the church of God in this our realm. Never let us despair for the truth.

Do the just thing and never be afraid, let the earth be removed and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea. If you do the right and stand up for Christ, you need never fear. What if nations crack like potter's vessels, and are driven like chaff before the wind by revolution after revolution? The saints of God rejoice that the battle is the Lord's, and He will deliver every foe into our hands ere long, and if He tarrieth for awhile, we will wait until He cometh, for He will surely bring the victory with Him.

Lastly, just this gentle word to any of you who may at this time be greatly suffering. “The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron.” Dear brethren and sisters, we must all pass over Kidron too, but the Prince’s footsteps, the Prince’s footsteps, are all along the road.

*“He leads us through no darker rooms
Than He went through before.”*

Let us have courage, then, and go through too. You have had a sad bereavement. Yes, I wonder not that your tears fell on that coffin-lid, ’twas a precious life to lose, but “Jesus wept,” and that handkerchief of yours is perfumed with His sympathy. You had a heavy loss, and you dread poverty. Well, ’tis an evil to be much dreaded, but the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head. Your poverty is gilded with His companionship, He was poorer than you.

Oh! but you have lately been slandered. ’Tis the lot of all the righteous, birds always peck the ripest and the richest fruit the most. But they slandered your Lord, they said He was a drunken man and a wine-bibber. They are only crowning you with the crown of thorns which once was put on His head, and the thorns are not so sharp for you as for Him, they were blunted by being put on His head. Ah! but you tell me that with all this a dear friend that you loved has turned against you. Remember Judas, and do not marvel any more.

“Ah!” say you, “but even the church of God thinks evil of me, though I have stood steadfast in the truth.” Remember your Lord was an alien to His mother’s children, and the church of His day was His direct enemy. Courage, dear brethren and fellow pilgrims to the skies. We must drink this cup, our heavenly Father has decreed it, but then He has mixed it too, and He promises us, if we drink it, that we shall by and bye drink of another cup of the new wine in the kingdom of glory. Submit, nay more, acquiesce, nay more, rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer with your Lord.

Cleave to your King when the many turn aside. Witness that He hath the living Word, and none upon the earth beside, and in the day when the trumpet ringeth out the victory, and the King cometh back to His own, you shall come back with Him to the ivory palaces and to the abodes of the blessed, where you shall be crowned, and shall dwell for ever.

Dear hearers, are you for Christ or for His enemies? Will you go with a despised Christ tonight? Will you take sides with Christ under the cloud? Will you go with him barefoot through the mire, or do you like a silver slipper religion? I pray you trust my Lord and Master. Take up His cross. It will be the best thing you ever did, for it will bring you a glory in which the shame shall be forgotten.

The Lord bless each one of you, and may these few words comfort those that are trembling, for Christ’s sake.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON

2 SAMUEL 15:13-23, ISAIAH 61, MARK 14:22-41

This was one of the greatest trials of David’s life.

2 Samuel Chapter 15. Verses 13-14. *And there came a messenger to David, saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.*

There is much to admire in David’s conduct when he fled from Absalom, but yet his courage would seem to have well-nigh forsaken him. In his brighter days before his great sin had weakened him, he would have been master of the situation, but now he trembles in the presence of the great calamity.

15. *And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.*

They were attached to him—ready to take his counsel at once. Can we say the same to King Jesus? Will every Christian here now say to his Master, “Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my Lord the King shall appoint”? There are many that pick and choose of Christ’s commands. They do not obey all His will. There are known duties which are neglected—plain precepts which are willfully forgotten. I would to God we could all say from our heart to King Jesus, “Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my Lord the King shall appoint.”

16-18. *And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.*

These were his old guard, soldiers which he kept always around his person, deeply attached to him, upon whose loyalty he could rely. But what a come-down from the King of Israel to have an army of only six hundred men—to be fleeing before his own rebellious people, led on by his more rebellious son!

19-23. *Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over; the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.*

A fit type of that future passage of the Kidron by the great son of David, when on that dark and doleful night, when all the powers of darkness met, the Prince—the King Himself—passed over that black and bitter brook into the garden of Gethsemane. There were faithful ones that went with David, there were some faithful ones with Christ. Happy are they who shall be found to be with their Lord and Master in the day of His sorrow, for they shall be with Him in the day of His joy.

Isaiah Chapter 61. Verses 1-2. *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me: because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;*

How condescending and how kind are the objects of our Savior’s mission—to put an end to sorrow. He looks out the mourners, they are the especial objects of His care, and all that He does has this for one of its grand objects—to comfort all that mourn. Surely if there be any troubled heart here, it may claim an interest in such a divine work as this. Jesus has come to comfort all that mourn. Shall he not comfort you?

3. *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,—*

To make an appointment—an ordinance—a decree—concerning them, and it will be to this effect.

3. *To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

So it seems that God finds glory in the helping of His sad sick, sorrowful creatures. He gets a glory out of making them, He gets higher glory out of new making them. Creation yields the moonlight glory, the new creation is a glory as of the sun shining in its strength. O ye mourners, may God grant you grace

now to give glory to God by cheerfully accepting those wondrous blessings of grace which Christ has come to bestow.

4. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

When mourning souls find comfort, and captive souls get liberty, they are full of life and full of energy, and they begin to restore what had become wasted and desolate. I warrant you that there is nothing for a church by way of medicine at all equal to pouring new blood into her by new-saved souls. They come among us with their new songs, like the sweet birds in summer, and seem to wake the morning with their gladsome music. They come among us like the dewdrops from the womb of the morning, sparkling in beauty, bearing the dew of their youth. May God send to many old churches that have got to be like old wastes, and some communities that have come to be like desolations—may He send to them these builders—these earnest, loving hearts to build them up.

5-6. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD:

God's true Israel, His chosen, His elect—they may look upon all other men as their ploughmen and their vine dressers. Kings and queens rule the world for you. For you the merchant, with his keel, divides the sea, for you the ploughman ploughs the soil. As for you, though you have a hand in these things, they are not your main employment. Your occupation is a higher one than theirs—the service of your God. Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord.

6. Men shall call you Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

For all things are of God, and all things are yours through Jesus Christ. In that same day in which the Lord comforts mourners and binds up their broken hearts, He gives them to enter into a sacred priesthood, in which they walk among the sons men as God's peculiar people—honored above all the rest of mankind. Oh! the distinctions which distinguishing grace makes! How it lifts the poor from the dunghill and setteth him among princes, even the princes of His people! Christ has done great things, indeed, for us, for though we were as beggars, behold He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign forever and ever.

7. For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion:

You may be persecuted: your name may be cast out as evil, but when the Lord in mercy blesses and visits you, you shall have a wonderful recompense—more than you could have expected. "For your shame ye shall have double."

7-8. Therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

There are churches in the world that are not churches of God, and they supply their needs by forced demands from the people, but God hateth robbery for a burnt offering. He accepts the willing gifts of His people, and with those who present them He makes an everlasting covenant.

9. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

Oh! to have such distinguishing marks of character about us that all who see us may see that the blessing of God is upon us. And this will be quite consistent with poverty, with sickness, for in the poverty there will be content, and in the sickness and depression of spirit there will yet be such divine upholdings that men shall be astonished that their fellowmen shall be capable of such joy under such circumstances. They "shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

10. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,—

Brothers and sisters, I wish we could all catch hold of the spirit of this verse—that each one of us would now say, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD."

10. My soul shall be joyful in my God;

What a precious sentence—"My soul shall be joyful in my God."

10. *For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

On those festive occasions the Orientals are wont to use all the wealth they have in decoration. The bridegroom decketh himself with a crown —puts on a tiara. He is a king for once. And the bride herself brings out all the many jewels with which Eastern women deck themselves.

Now all this, in a high spiritual sense, we find in Christ. He is not merely covering to us, but ornament and beauty, adornment, exaltation, glory, honor. How beautiful a child of God looks in Christ I cannot tell you, but I believe that next to His dear Son, the most engaging sight to the divine Father is any one of His dear children whom He sees in Christ. You know we all think our children lovely, and God knows His children to be so when He hath covered them with the robe of righteousness and clothed them with the garments of salvation.

11. *For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

Mark Chapter 14. Verse 22. *And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.*

It was part of a meal. It was no celebration. It was no sacrifice, bloody or unbloody. It was simply a commemorative ceremony, of which He would now give them a specimen even before it became commemorative. "As they did eat, Jesus took bread." No seeking for consecrated wafers or some special food, but such bread as they had been eating. "Blessed"—thanking God for it. "And break it and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body."

23-24. *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*

There was no fear of their making the mistake, which had been made by Romanists, of taking these words literally, because Jesus Christ was sitting there. They could not imagine that, as He took bread, He would say literally, "This bread is my body." Why, there was His body sitting there before them. Had He two bodies? When He gave them the cup and said, "This is my blood in the new covenant," they never dreamt of such a thing as that the wine in the cup was really and literally His blood. His blood was in His veins. They saw Him living there, not bleeding. No, it is an extraordinary thing that men who have the life of God in them, and have some spiritual discernment, have, nevertheless, in some instances, been found driving their faith into the belief of the absurd fable of transubstantiation.

Jesus Christ means "This represents my body. This represents my blood"—the usual way of uttering such a sense both in the Old and New Testament, even as Christ said, "I am the door." Yet nobody thought that He was a door. "I am the way." Nobody thought He was a roadway. "I am the shepherd," and yet nobody supposed that He carried a crook, and that He literally kept sheep. So says he, "This is my body, this is my blood," and they who sat there were in their senses, and they were not superstitious. They knew what He meant.

25-26. *Verily I say unto you, I will drink more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

I cannot resist repeating the remark I have often made about that singing of a hymn. It seems to me such a grand, brave thing for the Savior to sing a hymn after the last meal that He would eat with His disciples before His death, when He knew that He was going forth to all the torture of Pilate's hall, and to death at Calvary. Yet He says, "Let us sing a hymn." He chose a Psalm of David, and I dare say, Himself pitched a tune. "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives."

27. *And Jesus saith unto them,—*

As they walked along.

27-28. *All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.*

What sweet comfort was there—as much as to say, “Though you are scattered, I will gather you. Though you forsake me, I will not forsake you. I will go before you into our old haunts, into that Galilee of the Gentiles where I was wont to preach aforetime. I will go before you into Galilee.”

29-30. *But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night,—*

The day begins at sunset.

30-31. *Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, if I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.*

So Peter was not alone in his intense, though rash expression of attachment. They did mean, all of them, to stand to their Master, and to die with Him, as you and I mean to. But shall we carry it out better than they, think you? Not if our resolve, like theirs, is made in our own strength.

32. *And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane:*

The garden on the side of the hill of Olivet.

32. *And he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.*

Eight of you keep watching at the garden gate to let me know when my betrayer comes.

33. *And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;*

They had not seen Him in that state before. He seemed like one distracted, so amazed—like one astonished out of all composure, unable to collect Himself or to contain Himself, and to be very heavy, as if an awful weight pressed on His soul.

34. *And saith unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*

These three were to make His closest bodyguard, to intimate to Him if any came.

35. *And he went forward a little,—*

A stone's cast, so as to be retired from them.

35-36. *And fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

That was the point of the prayer, the very pith and marrow of it—not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37. *And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping,—*

Three choice guards—His bosom companions.

37. *And saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?*

Matthew and Luke tell us that He said, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” and Mark tells us here that He especially said that to Peter. Now remember that Mark is the Gospel of Peter. No doubt Mark was the great friend of Peter, and writes his Gospel from Peter's point, so Peter in the Gospel of Mark records the worst things about himself, and he just puts it here that the Master said, “Simon, sleepest thou?” Bad enough for the others to be asleep, but “Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?”

38. *Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.*

Oh! that was a kind excuse to make for them—to say something good about them, even though they slept when they ought to have comforted Him. He did see that their spirit was ready, but the flesh was weak.

39-40. *And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer him.*

How could they excuse their conduct? A second time asleep! They were in a muddled state.

41. *And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.